

Does plastic surgery make a beauty or a beast? assignment



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Does Plastic Surgery Make a Beauty or a Beast? Alaa Al-koubeitri Advanced English Composition, Group 1 Miss Hanouf Al-alawi January 12, 2009 Abstract

People are becoming more concerned about their physical appearance as a result of society's role in changing and idealizing the beauty standards. So in recent years, plastic surgeries were vastly increasing among people.

Procedures and effects of such surgeries gained an increased attention in the medical and psychological fields.

This paper analyzes past studies made in relation to whether plastic surgeries make a beauty or a beast from patients according to the physical and psychological effects that take place after such surgeries. Across to what I have analyzed, such surgeries do succeed for most patients generating positive physical, psychological, and social outcomes. While unsuccessful surgeries are very possible leading to a disturbed image and negative reactions, and sometimes leading to serious health risks and deaths.

Background According to Rochester General Hospital (n. d. , Plastic surgery is usually a word that is perceived as " artificial" by people. But the word is actually derived from a Greek word plastikos, meaning " to mold or give form". As the hospital illustrated, Plastic surgeries come in two forms; reconstructive which is made to improve irregular functions of the body, and Cosmetic surgery which is made to improve appearance. We can realize in today's world, with the influence of the media, celebrities, and societies as a whole, how beauty standards are changing and how people's perceptions of themselves are getting poorer along with what they see.

Therefore, they are striving to change themselves physically, even if dramatic changes were required to cope with what's " Ideal and accepted".

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Self-image became a matter that depends on what others judge and perceive us. In order to attain the ideal beauty as defined and forced by the society, people undergo plastic surgeries as being their ultimate aid, but I would argue that results of such surgeries are not satisfactory and successful for all patients. What Are the Beauty Standards among people? “ The word beauty always refers to the female body. ” (Saltzberg & Chrisler, 1995, para.) According to Fallon (1990), beauty varies from one culture to another with the standards constantly changing overtime (as cited in Saltzberg and Chrisler, 1995). They also indicated that Females are basically judged upon their decorative qualities by their societies, therefore they strive to attain what their culture perceive about the ideal beauty and perfect body. As Saltzberg and Chrisler (1995) have also expressed, beauty is a concept that cannot be measured in quantity which makes it difficult to define. The ideal is supposed to be very difficult to attain and an unusual feature.

Of the women who strive for it, very few are able to reach, and when they reach, that ideal image changes again to make it unusual. (Saltzberg & Chrisler, 1995) Even though that ideal changes several times, women struggle to change along with it whatever the costs and consequences (physical, financial, psychological). They give in to what others want them to be in order to fit in. Although pain and risks are highly possible in attaining what’s beautiful, women still exert high efforts to reach that point while suffering at the same time.

For example, physical costs may include the pain of nose and ear piercing, tight jeans, high-heeled shoes, tattooing, etc (Saltzberg & Chrisler, 1995). As Saltzberg and Chrisler (1995) have indicated, the ideal beauty has resided in <https://assignbuster.com/does-plastic-surgery-make-a-beauty-or-a-beast-assignment/>

being completely against what a person actually is in relation to psychological and physical aspects, such as thin bodies with large breasts, and eroticizing while being naive. As a result, women gain a sense of insecurity, and inadequacy about their body image.

Moreover, as Freedman (1988) has indicated, women get highly stressed under the pressure of coping with the difficult demands, and keeping up with the constantly changing ideal beauty. (as cited in Saltzberg and Chrisler 1995) The Trend Toward Plastic Surgery Back in history, plastic surgery was initially made to soldiers who underwent wars. Its purpose was to restore their faces to their original image. But this field became more practiced and developed through the years until it became more of a beauty matter rather than just reconstruction (Basset, 2008). According to the American Society of Plastic Surgery, 9.4 billion dollars is spent on cosmetic surgery, and 10.2 million cosmetic surgery procedures performed in 2005. There has been a 38% increase since 2000" (Lee & Clark, n. d. para. 1). As the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic surgery (2008) has reported, there are about 11.7 million surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures performed in the United States. Cosmetic surgeries are becoming a trendy and acceptable phenomenon mostly among women while men are catching up (Basset, 2008).

According to Wahlberg (2008) there was a 59% increase in cosmetic surgeries from men (as cited in Basset, 2008). As Berry (2007) has illustrated, the reason why people modify their appearances through cosmetic products and surgeries is to beautify and make their place in the world a unique one. Many celebrities undergo plastic surgeries for the sake

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of beauty, whom in turn influence the youth to imitate them because they want to look like their favorite celebs (Maxwell, 1993).

Women's magazines include about ten times more articles promoting weight loss and over three quarters of magazine covers include a message for women on how to change their image through cosmetic surgery, diet and exercise (Media Awareness Network, n. d.). According to Lee and Clark (n. d.), women's magazines have been associated with beauty by practicing plastic surgeries, where if done expertly can work miracles on women's body parts. (In advertising, women's bodies are being used to sell almost everything and a fact says thin is " in" (Media Awareness Network, n. d.).

As a result of the media's influence, women are feeling insecure and inadequate with their self-image and are more likely to engage in some cosmetic procedure (Media Awareness Network, n. d.). Cosmetic surgery reality shows have been widely invading televisions with a remarkable acceptance, although they have negatively changed people's perceptions of self-image (Heine et al. 2004). According to Heine et al. (2004), cosmetic surgery shows such as " The Swan" and " Extreme Makeover " convey to people that the only way to be beautiful is to change ourselves physically by going under the knife.

They force people to choose between either to accept being ugly, or get surgery and reach the ideal beauty in a fast and easy way. What Heine et al. (2004) are tried to illustrate is that such shows are merely companies who are trying to market their shows by destroying the society's self-image, so people would think that they should do the same to fit in. Dr. Robert Stubbs,

a cosmetic surgeon was quoted saying, " They think what they see on TV is real. What they don't understand is, its edited. (Basset, 2008, para. 3).

Media's role is a big contributor for people to seek plastic surgeries in the sake of attaining their virtual ideal beauty that is modified on computers at most times. Health Risks of Plastic Surgery According to Basset (2008), what cosmetic surgery reality shows are claiming; a fast and easy process, is not everything. The severe reality is all hidden from the audience. Cosmetic surgeries can end with deaths, or lead to serious problems in the long term. Blood clots, infections, reaction to anesthesia, loss of sensation, asymmetry, and inability to breast feed are just a few of the common effects of cosmetic surgery can have on a person" (Basset, 2008, para. 4). Basset (2008) has mentioned a very popular surgery " Liposuction" that can cause fluid loss in the body leading to heart problems. She also pointed to other serious cases where some patients suffered cardiac arrest along six hours for a face and breast lift and others who have died under routine surgeries.

Moreover, she emphasized that risks for patients who have health problems such as diabetes, obesity, or smokers, are much higher. A wise example given by Katz (2007) lies with Donda West, a rapper who died during a cosmetic surgery due to complications (as cited in Basset, 2008). According to Rao, Ely, and Hoffman (1999), they reviewed the records of deaths due to several types of plastic surgery from 1993 to 1998, at the Office of Chief Medical Examiner of the city of New York and had noted 48, 527 deaths during the period.

I think such a number of deaths are not accidental or rare, rather, surgical operations should be intensely reviewed to ensure safety among patients.
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Successful Results of Plastic Surgery According to the Aesthetic Surgery Journal (2006), studies made on cosmetic surgeries' influence on women's body-image and sexual satisfaction revealed that women felt much better about their appearance after surgery, in addition to being both; them and their partners, more sexually satisfied (as cited in The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, 2006).

Moreover, as the Aesthetic Surgery Journal (2008) has also revealed, patients who undergo breast reduction surgery experience less pain in their lower back, and less discomfort of having large breasts (as cited in ASAPS, 2008). I think those who undergo reconstructive surgery for the sake of regaining their original image after an accident for example, are more appropriate patients because they are truly the ones who could be negatively affected emotionally and psychologically with their appearance.

While normal people who undergo cosmetic surgery for the sake of beautifying should be more aware to the extent they seek to change in their image, because drastic changes may lead to an undesired outcome. As Dittmann (2005) has noted, studies made on patient's psychological and psychosocial aspects before and after cosmetic surgery have revealed an increase in satisfaction with their body image, and quality of life (as cited in Honigman, Phillips, & Castle, 2004).

Sarwer (2001) has also noted a study made on patients after a year from receiving a cosmetic surgery and revealed that 87 % of patients were satisfied with the results which led to improvements in their body-image, and experienced less negative emotions in social functions (as cited in Dittmann,

2005). According to studies of psychosocial outcomes of cosmetic surgery made by Castle, Honigman, and Phillips (2002), most people are generally satisfied with the results of cosmetic procedures and felt improvements about their self-worth, self-esteem, distress and shyness, and quality of life.

But they noted that those studies have some methodological limitations and results may be subject to bias. Unsatisfactory outcomes of Plastic Surgery As Castle et al (2002) have noted in their studies, some of the factors associated with unsatisfactory outcomes may include being young, suffering from depression or anxiety, and having a personality disorder. They also noted that patients who undergo extensive cosmetic procedures or have their sensations (feeling the skin tightened after a face-lift) changed are likely to experience a serious body-image disturbance, and negative psychological functions. Castle et al. 2002) have indicated that most people with body dysmorphic disorder (people who are convinced that they are ugly) report poor outcomes following a cosmetic procedure. According to Honigman et al. (2004), people who put unrealistic expectations before surgery will most probably be unsatisfied with the results (as cited in Dittmann, 2005) According to Berry (2007), the performance of cosmetic surgery has a potential of not meeting with the patients expectations, therefore dissatisfaction in such cases will lead those patients to undergo corrective surgeries, even more than once if needed in hope of correcting the problem.

But results after redo's may get even worse than before or lead to deep complications. As berry (2007) have illustrated, " the medical risks increase and the likelihood of pleasing cosmetic results decrease with these revisions, <https://assignbuster.com/does-plastic-surgery-make-a-beauty-or-a-beast-assignment/>

mainly because of an accumulation of scar tissue and the loss of cartilage” (p. 72). In addition, Berry (2007) has argued that statistics on repeated procedures and complications are unknown, but most probably are underreported. But based on what’s revealed, there is an increase in such surgeries for two results. First, there is a demand by patients for perfect results linked with dissatisfaction with their self-image.

Secondly, most doctors are not qualified in plastic surgery, but want to get into the market for its big cash opportunity. Studies have revealed that there is an unexpected relationship between cosmetic breast augmentation and suicide (Sarwer, Brown & Evans, 2007). According to Sarwer et al. (2007), explanations of the relationship include four contributing factors. Firstly, Personality characteristics and psychopathology, such as age, ethnicity, marital status, smokers, alcoholics, people with eating disorders and body image dissatisfaction, have been found to be factors leading to suicide in psychiatric and community samples.

According to Joiner (2003, p. 3), “ the suicide rate among women with breast implants could be almost five times the rate for the general population of women” (as cited in Sarwer et al. 2007). Secondly, motivations (interpersonal and external factors), and expectations (surgical, psychological, and social benefits). Finally, psychological functioning and postoperative complications, where implant-related complications (discomfort, leakage) lead to dissatisfaction, anxiety and a decline in the quality of life. Conclusion

According to what I have reviewed and analyzed, if plastic surgeries performance beautified a person's overall image, or body feature it will probably reflect some positive effects on patients, such as a boost in self-esteem, self-worth, confidence about self-image and quality of life, but still such outcomes are not one-hundred percent guaranteed because the studies made on those psychological and psychosocial outcomes were limited. But according to studies, most patients do report satisfaction after cosmetic procedures. But on the other hand, performance does not always reach success and some negative outcomes are possible.

If expertly speaking, some plastic surgeons are not qualified in specific cosmetic procedures, but pretend they are to attract patients and in return may make people worse than when normal. And if speaking of health and risks, such surgeries do have some serious complications during or after the operation, and in some cases causes death. Moreover, if patient's expectations were not met they would either fall into psychological problems such as depression and isolation, or seek corrective surgeries which make results worse than before leading to more physical and health problems.